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Maryland
Department of Economic & Employment Development

LABOR MARKET DIMENSIONS

A Monthly Report on the Dynamics of the Labor Market in Maryland

March, 1989

Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development
Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information
1100 North Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

William Donald Schaefer, Governor
J. Randall Evans, Secretary

LABOR MARKET DIMENSIONS
MARCH, 1989

MARYLAND

UNEMPLOYMENT TAKES SEASONAL SLIDE

Following a series of seasonal layoffs in the winter months, Maryland's labor market began to rebound from its cold weather slump in March. As weather conditions moderated, local businesses throughout the state gradually began to ease back into a hiring posture. Both the labor force and employment levels hit new records for the month. As statewide employment headed back up, unemployment dropped back by 0.2 percentage points over the month. At 4.0 percent, March's rate was the lowest unemployment rate on record for the month in nearly two decades.

Jobseekers, encouraged by the onset of springtime hiring activity, boosted the statewide labor force to a level of 2,492,715 in March, up from 2,477,771. Meanwhile, the number of Marylanders holding jobs moved up by an estimated 17,621 persons. March's employment growth was strong enough to cover the increase of 14,944 in the labor force and, at the same time, to reduce the statewide unemployment rolls by nearly 2,700 persons.

	March 1989	February 1989	March 1988
Civilian Labor Force	2,492,715	2,477,771	2,439,338
Total Employment	2,392,432	2,374,811	2,329,508
Total Unemployment	100,283	102,960	109,830
Unemployment Rate	4.0	4.2	4.5
National Civilian Unemployment Rate	5.2	5.6	6.9

Since last March, the labor market experience of Maryland residents has improved noticeably. The resiliency of the statewide economy has drawn an additional 53,377 jobseekers into the labor force over the past year. More importantly, there are now nearly 63,000 more residents with jobs and 9,547 fewer persons counted among the unemployed. Compared with a year ago, the March unemployment rate was down from 4.5 percent.

The outlook for jobseeekers across the nation also improved somewhat during March. The nation's unemployment rate dropped back by 0.4 percentage points to register 5.2 percent in March. The increase in the number of workers nationwide was almost identical to that statewide during March. However, growth in the national labor force was proportionally much slower than in Maryland.

When ranking Maryland with the other states, Maryland had the ninth lowest jobless rate in the country during March. This was down one notch from the position held in February. Only one state in the mid-atlantic region, Delaware, recorded a jobless rate below that of Maryland during both February and March.

SPRINGTIME HIRING OFF TO A SLOW START

With spring hiring underway, Maryland's nonagricultural payroll employment increased by 8,100 jobs during March. This year's hiring activity, although on schedule, was off to a much slower start than in 1988 when hiring boosted the March job count by a much greater 29,000 jobs. Based on the job gains reported over the past few months, it appears that Maryland's job growth is being pinched by the same inflationary pressures that are dampening national job growth.

During March, construction slowly began to pull out of its winter slump with employment moving up by an estimated 1,900 jobs. Employment advanced in all facets of construction; however, special trade contractors were the primary growth contributor in this sector, accounting for well over 50.0 percent of the overall industry gain during March. As weather conditions continue to improve, prospects in construction should pick up. However, with mortgage rates currently holding at relatively high levels, future progress in homebuilding poses a major uncertainty for the industry.

The most significant gains over the month emanated from seasonal hiring activity in the services sector. Employment gains in this diverse industry group accounted for approximately one-third of the total statewide job increase during March. Within the industry, increased demand helped to elevate employment levels in agri-business, amusement, health, and personal services.

Elsewhere in the private sector, seasonal hiring was also noteworthy in local eateries and in trade establishments selling building materials, garden supplies, and hardware items.

Within the public sector, continuing recall activity at community colleges and local boards of education exerted the primary influence on government payrolls.

MARYLAND
NONAGRICULTURAL PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT* BY INDUSTRY
BY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT
(IN THOUSANDS)
MARCH 1989

Major Industry Group	March 1989	February 1989	March 1988
Total Nonagricultural Employment	2094.1	2086.0	2063.4
Manufacturing	206.7	206.5	207.9
Durable Goods	110.1	110.1	111.9
Nondurable Goods	96.6	96.4	96.0
Nonmanufacturing	1887.4	1879.5	1855.5
Mining	1.6	1.6	1.6
Construction	151.8	149.9	153.1
Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities	95.7	95.5	94.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade	528.0	526.9	522.3
Wholesale Trade	112.8	112.1	111.8
Retail Trade	415.2	414.8	410.5
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	130.4	130.1	127.7
Services	566.5	563.8	554.2
Total Government	413.4	411.7	402.6
Federal	131.4	131.1	131.2
State	95.9	95.5	93.4
Local	186.1	185.1	178.0

* The count is of jobs, not workers. It includes full and part-time wage earners employed during pay period including the 12th of the month.

NOTE: Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Current data preliminary; previous month revised.

Additional industry detail available upon request.

Prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

HOURS AND EARNINGS OF PRODUCTION WORKERS IN SELECTED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES
MARCH 1989

Major Industry Grouping	AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS		AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS	
	Mar.1989	Feb.1989	Mar.1989	Feb.1989	Mar.1989	Feb.1989
MARYLAND						
Manufacturing	41.3	41.2	$449.34	$444.14	$10.88	$10.78
Durable Goods	42.8	42.7	499.90	490.20	11.68	11.48
Lumber and Wood Products	37.1	37.7	309.79	318.19	8.35	8.44
Furniture and Fixtures	39.9	41.4	383.04	398.68	9.60	9.63
Stone, Clay & Glass Products	44.9	42.1	486.72	452.58	10.84	10.75
Primary Metal Industries	43.5	44.1	629.45	636.80	14.47	14.44
Fabricated Metals	39.5	41.0	378.02	389.91	9.57	9.51
Machinery, Exc. Electrical	43.7	43.9	540.13	530.75	12.36	12.09
Electronic and Electrical Equipment	43.5	43.8	430.22	428.36	9.89	9.78
Transportation Equipment	44.9	43.6	682.03	638.74	15.19	14.65
Instruments and Related	40.0	39.5	385.20	376.83	9.63	9.54
Miscellaneous Manufacturing Indus.	39.9	40.8	350.72	365.57	8.79	8.96
Nondurable Goods	39.8	39.6	398.80	396.40	10.02	10.01
Food and Kindred Products	38.8	39.2	358.90	361.42	9.25	9.22
Apparel and Textile Products	36.3	36.1	253.74	250.17	6.99	6.93
Paper and Allied Products	42.2	41.7	405.54	392.40	9.61	9.41
Printing and Publishing	39.1	38.2	461.38	456.49	11.80	11.95
Chemicals and Allied Products	42.8	43.1	520.88	524.96	12.17	12.18
Rubber and Plastic Products	42.8	42.8	391.62	388.20	9.15	9.07
BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA						
Manufacturing	41.6	41.3	$477.57	$469.58	$11.48	$11.37
Durable Goods	43.2	42.5	526.61	508.73	12.19	11.97
Nondurable Goods	39.5	39.8	416.73	421.48	10.55	10.59

REGIONAL ECONOMICS

BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area, a decline of 0.1 percentage points lowered the regional unemployment rate to 4.4 percent in March--a rate significantly below last March's estimate of 4.9 percent. Within the area, jobless rates declined in Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Queen Anne's counties and held steady in the remaining jurisdictions. The largest decline occurred in Queen Anne's County where the paring of 106 persons from the unemployment rolls caused the rate to drop back from 4.0 percent to 3.3 percent. Howard County, for the second consecutive month, had the lowest unemployment rate statewide. Throughout the region, seasonal hiring added to payrolls in construction, eating and drinking establishments, hotels, and in personal, business, amusement and health services.

MARYLAND'S D.C. SUBURBS

The jobless rate in Maryland's D.C. suburbs dropped marginally from 2.9 percent in February to 2.8 percent in March. During March, more than 6,500 suburbanites entered the job market in search of employment. The regional employment gain, of 7,159 persons, was more than enough to offset this increase and sufficiently strong enough to reduce unemployment volume by nearly 600 persons. Within the area, Charles and Frederick were the only counties to show any measurable activity. In Charles, joblessness rose slightly to 2.8 percent while, in Frederick, the rate receded from 4.1 percent in February to 3.5 percent in March. In the D.C. area, hiring activity during March was strongest in construction and services.

WESTERN MARYLAND

Western Maryland, although continuing to top the list with a March unemployment rate of 7.1 percent, showed the most improvement over the month with a drop of 0.5 percentage points. Nearly 75.0 percent of the statewide unemployment decline occurred in the western area. Unemployment rates dropped back from month-ago and year-ago levels in each of the western counties. In Washington County, the withdrawal of an estimated 276 persons from the labor force was, in large part, responsible for reducing the local unemployment rate to 5.5 percent in March. Although manufacturing employment dropped back in March, the regional job market benefited from gains in construction, trade, and services.

BALANCE OF STATE

In the Balance of State area, a decline of 907 persons on the region's jobless rolls helped ease the area's unemployment rate down from 6.5 percent to 6.1 percent. Monthly unemployment rates declined in each of the shore counties, with the exception of St. Mary's and Wicomico. In St. Mary's, labor force expansion outpaced employment gains, causing joblessness to rise from 4.2 percent to 4.6 percent. In Wicomico, on the other hand, declining employment was primarily responsible for a slight increase, from 5.0 percent to 5.1 percent, in the county's jobless rate. Within the region, local unemployment rates formed a wide range, spanning from a low of 3.5 percent in Talbot to a high of 12.8 percent in Somerset.

NONAGRICULTURAL PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT* BY INDUSTRY - BY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT
(in thousands)
BY REGION--MARCH 1989

Major Industry Grouping	BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA		MARYLAND PORTION D.C. SUBURBS		WESTERN MARYLAND		BALANCE OF STATE	
	Mar.1989	Feb.1989	Mar.1989	Feb.1989	Mar.1989	Feb.1989	Mar.1989	Feb.1989
Total Nonagricultural Employment	1120.5	1108.7	760.2	754.3	90.1	89.5	133.9	133.9
Manufacturing	130.9	130.7	36.2	36.0	15.6	15.8	23.7	24.0
Durable Goods	74.2	74.4	18.2	18.0	7.5	7.5	9.6	9.8
Nondurable Goods	56.7	56.3	18.0	18.0	8.1	8.3	14.1	14.2
Nonmanufacturing	989.6	978.0	724.0	718.3	74.5	73.7	110.2	109.9
Construction	73.2	70.4	66.4	63.9	6.5	6.2	9.8	9.8
Transportation & Public Utilities	54.8	54.4	29.4	29.2	5.1	5.0	7.5	7.5
Wholesale and Retail Trade	271.8	269.6	201.4	200.9	25.4	25.3	33.4	33.4
Wholesale Trade	66.5	66.2	36.2	36.1	-	-	-	-
Retail Trade	205.3	203.4	165.2	164.8	-	-	-	-
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	77.4	77.4	44.2	43.9	3.3	3.3	4.7	4.7
Services and Mining	300.4	295.9	220.0	218.5	19.3	19.2	30.1	29.7
Total Government	212.0	210.3	162.6	161.9	14.9	14.7	24.7	24.8
Federal	52.7	52.5	70.2	70.1	1.9	1.9	6.7	6.7
State	65.5	65.4	20.6	20.3	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.0
Local	93.8	92.4	71.8	71.5	8.3	8.1	13.0	13.1

*The count is of jobs, not workers. It includes full and part-time wage earners employed during pay period including the 12th of the month.

NOTE: Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Additional industry detail available upon request. Current data preliminary; previous month revised.

Prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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STATE OF MARYLAND
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND UNEMPLOYMENT
BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE

MARCH, 1989

AREA	CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE		EMPLOYMENT		UNEMPLOYMENT		UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	MARCH	FEBRUARY*	MARCH	FEBRUARY*	MARCH	FEBRUARY*	MARCH	FEBRUARY*	MARCH '88
MARYLAND	2,492,715	2,477,771	2,392,432	2,374,811	100,283	102,960	4.0	4.2	4.5
BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA	1,192,341	1,184,300	1,139,542	1,130,821	52,799	53,479	4.4	4.5	4.9
BALTIMORE CITY	343,092	340,290	319,390	316,945	23,702	23,345	6.9	6.9	7.6
ANNE ARUNDEL	213,414	211,852	207,018	205,433	6,396	6,419	3.0	3.0	3.3
BALTIMORE	386,117	383,675	371,657	368,812	14,460	14,863	3.7	3.9	4.2
CARROLL	62,416	62,066	60,094	59,634	2,322	2,432	3.7	3.9	3.9
HARFORD	80,970	80,805	77,412	76,820	3,558	3,985	4.4	4.9	5.1
HOWARD	90,800	90,087	88,953	88,272	1,847	1,815	2.0	2.0	2.2
QUEEN ANNE'S	15,533	15,524	15,019	14,904	514	620	3.3	4.0	4.6
D. C. AREA	993,200	986,632	965,496	958,337	27,704	28,295	2.8	2.9	3.1
CALVERT	23,242	23,074	22,242	22,077	1,000	997	4.3	4.3	4.5
CHARLES	47,831	47,390	46,476	46,131	1,355	1,259	2.8	2.7	3.2
FREDERICK	77,305	77,235	74,592	74,038	2,713	3,197	3.5	4.1	3.8
MONTGOMERY	424,667	421,654	415,279	412,200	9,388	9,454	2.2	2.2	2.4
PRINCE GEORGE'S	420,156	417,278	406,908	403,890	13,248	13,388	3.2	3.2	3.5
WESTERN MARYLAND	105,117	105,007	97,605	96,998	7,512	8,009	7.1	7.6	8.7
ALLEGANY	32,939	32,718	30,002	29,727	2,937	2,991	8.9	9.1	10.8
GARRETT	12,972	12,807	11,673	11,442	1,299	1,365	10.0	10.7	11.5
WASHINGTON	59,206	59,482	55,930	55,829	3,276	3,653	5.5	6.1	7.0
BALANCE OF STATE	202,056	201,831	189,787	188,655	12,269	13,176	6.1	6.5	6.7
CAROLINE	14,123	14,076	13,409	13,319	714	757	5.1	5.4	5.6
CECIL	34,642	34,966	32,635	32,576	2,007	2,390	5.8	6.8	6.7
DORCHESTER	17,154	17,390	15,707	15,815	1,447	1,575	8.4	9.1	8.4
KENT	9,096	9,001	8,648	8,377	448	624	4.9	6.9	5.2
ST. MARY'S	38,934	38,496	37,154	36,865	1,780	1,631	4.6	4.2	5.1
SOMERSET	11,303	11,168	9,851	9,729	1,452	1,439	12.8	12.9	13.4
TALBOT	17,078	16,905	16,486	16,233	592	672	3.5	4.0	3.3
WICOMICO	41,229	41,323	39,129	39,238	2,100	2,085	5.1	5.0	6.1
WORCESTER	18,497	18,506	16,768	16,503	1,729	2,003	9.3	10.8	10.8
[1] UNITED STATES	122,223,000	121,906,000	115,844,000	115,023,000	6,378,000	6,883,000	5.2	5.6	5.9

*Estimates for the state are revised.

[1] Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding. These are estimates relating to the week of the 12th of each month. The count is of persons not jobs. All data are not seasonally adjusted.

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